

Madame Chair and members of the Committee, for the record my name is Linda Sandman-that is spelled SANDMAN. I am the Owner/Administrator of SonHeaven Assisted Living in Helena. I am here to speak in support of HB255.

I have 2 small assisted living homes that serve 14 to 15 residents in each facility. HB255 is an important piece of Legislation to Assisted Living facilities in Montana. There are currently 186 licensed A.L. facilities in Montana, 70% of which are 20 beds or under. I am a good example of the typical AL facility found in a rural state such as Montana. The majority -80%-of residents served in A.L. are women.

Having your hair done is so important to most residents. It has a direct bearing on our residents feeling of well being and quality of life. The residents we serve are frail elderly, many of whom use walkers, wheelchairs or other assistive devices. We want the ability to use cosmetologists in our facilities without having to meet the requirements of being a licensed salon. We don't provide hair services to anyone but the people who live in our homes. Given my small facilities it would too costly and impractical to become a licensed salon. Having to meet salon requirements would end up increasing the fees that our residents pay for these highly valued services. Having to transport our frail and frequently confused residents to outside salons is a hardship on both the facility and the resident.

This bill sailed through the house with 14 yes votes to 0 in committee; 100 yes votes to 0 on second reading and 99 to 0 on 3rd reading. Now it is disappointing to hear that the Salon & Spa Assoc. has decided to come out and oppose this important bill.

I want to mention that prior to opening my AL facilities I was the Bureau Chief of the Certification Bureau with DPHHS that was responsible for regulating nursing homes. Our surveyors were involved in doing very thorough inspections of these facilities, including the areas where hair services were provided. Our life safety code surveyors did not view these areas as high risk or hazardous areas. The most serious deficiency that ever got cited concerning these areas involved vacuum breakers.

I urge this committee to question the opponents closely and be very leery of claims of safety concerns, etc. I'm sure you would agree with me that a cosmetologist is going to be in a better position to use a curling iron safely, and apply a permanent to someone's hair properly than an unlicensed staff. Unfortunately, if this bill doesn't pass that's what we will continue to be faced with- using only unlicensed staff to provide hair services to our residents.

I, as well as my residents and their families am hoping that you will do the right thing and vote a "DO PASS" for HB255.

Linda Sandman

From: <Lajam1@AOL.COM>
To: <LSANDMAN@BRESNAN.NET>
Sent: Thursday, March 01, 2007 9:56 AM
Subject: HB 255

Here is copy of one I sent:

Mr Balyeat,

HB 255 is a good bill. My mother lives in an assisted living facility where she can take her walker, oxygen, etc and make a short trip down the hall to have her hair done by a professional cosmetologist. Nursing homes and assisted living facilities should be exempted from rules governing beauty shops. The cost to facility owners to enlarge space and comply in other ways would be exorbitant and simply unnecessary. I am not sure why the cosmetologist lobbyist got so "worked up," about this bill—obviously he/she has never spent much time in an assisted living facility.

Thanks, Lynn James

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